

The Political Economy of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (West Bank)

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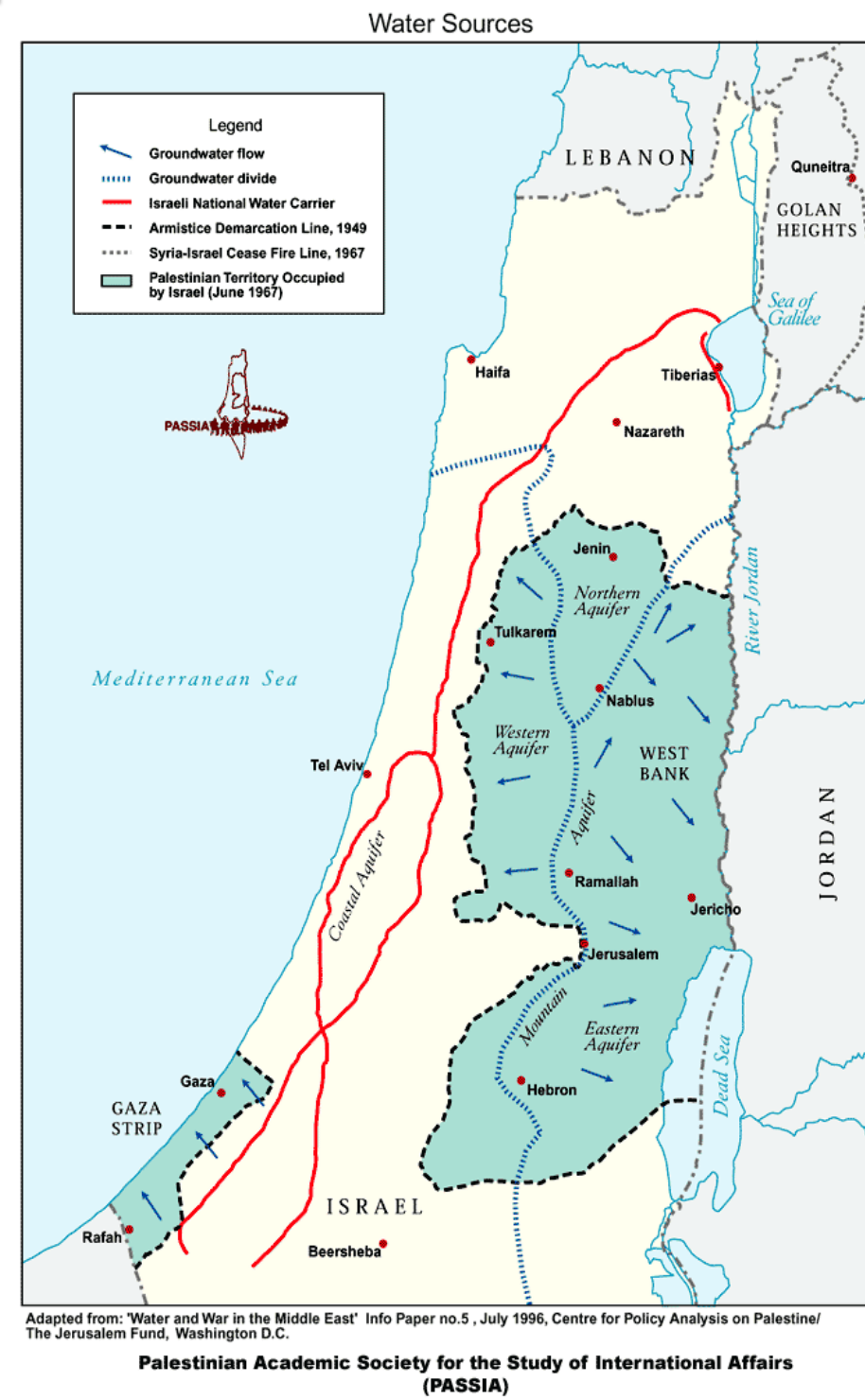
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Abstract

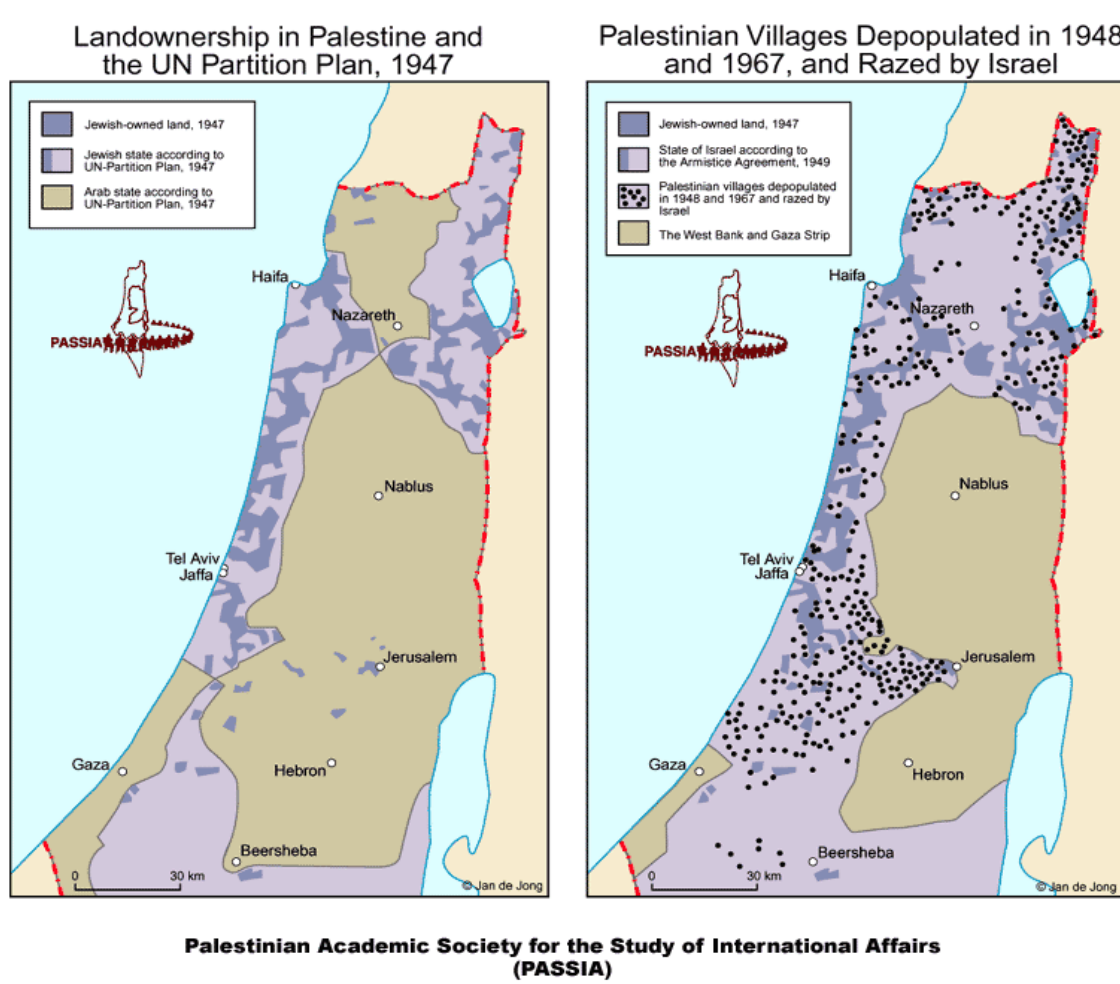
What are the economic incentives that lie within the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict? Which actors profit most with the Occupation of the West Bank? This thesis attempts to define Israel-Palestine's key economic resources that generate the largest amount of revenue, along with those gaining those profits and their interests. It also attempts to bridge the gap between Public Policy and Private Economic revenue, made from the Israeli Occupation (Specifically the Green Line/West Bank.) When these resources, actors and their influences are understood, this is when the true temperament of the Israeli-Palestinian state will surface.

Water



70-80% of the region's water aquifers lie beneath the West Bank, or the "Green Line." This aquifer is located on the Yukon/Tanimim Mountain which is estimated to contribute to 25-40% of Israel's total water supply. This is a crucial area for Israel as recent research now suggests the Israel will soon be forced to rely on recycled waste-water. The Zionist dream of "making the desert bloom" has allowed Jewish farmers to invoke nationalism to defend their right for subsidized water for irrigation. Water has also been used as a bargaining chip for Israel, when in debate with the PLO, as Israel's economy has shifted to a more industrial and skills intensive-service based market.

History of the Green Line



In 1949, an Armistice Agreement halted the Arab-Israeli war, that had been raging on since the birth of Israel, on May 14, 1948. A green marker was used to draw de-facto borders for Israel and Palestine. These borders are referred today as the Green Line.

However these lines did not last long as severe radicalization of the conflict led to a the Six Day War of 1967. Israeli settlements began to be built at an alarming rate, Palestinians were forced from their homes, and tensions throughout the region continued to boil, as more and more Palestinian land fell under the Zionist-led Occupation.

Today, talks of a two-state solution, and an universal recognition of Palestine as its own sovereign nation circulate through out peace organizations and the United Nations. However with crucial natural and technological resources present along this Green Line, it has become an obstacle for many peace agreements. But for others, this is also an easy way to exploit and invest in these tactical resources.

Laws of the Land

In 2010, 42.8% of the land in the West Bank was controlled by Israeli settlements. The Sasson Report was published in 2005, and is considered to be one of the most groundbreaking reports in the history of this conflict. It clearly defined the outposts and the continuous construction as a violation of international law. Authorities involved in the authorization of expansion in Palestinian territory are the **"Ministry of Defense and the IDF, including the Civil Administration; the Ministry of Construction & Housing; the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization; the Ministry of Interior Affairs."**

Israel uses a distorted interpretation of the concept of "state land" in which the State Attorney's Office uses the concept in the Ottoman Land Law, contradicting legal requirements of the Israeli Mandatory Supreme Court. This form of "legal gymnastics" makes it possible for the government to seize previously private Palestinian land. According to the UNRWA, the West Bank conflict and continuous occupation has led to almost 800,000 Palestinian refugees.

AFSC Investment Screen and Multi-National Corporations

On March 8, 2008, the American Friends Service Committee's Board approved an affirmative investment screen specific to the Israeli Occupation. This screen calls for any MNCs in Israel to not make any profits off of the illegal occupation and coinciding violence against Palestinians by the IDF. However several major corporations located in Israel are currently violating the AFSC investment screen.



Corporations such as Caterpillar profit a great deal from construction as they provide bulldozers for construction of outposts and the separation wall. These bulldozers have also been known to be weaponized and have killed an estimated 1400 Palestinians. Other technology and weapons MNCs such as Lockheed Martin, Motorola Solutions, Boeing and more are responsible for violating this investment screen, and have yet to be held responsible. *"Israel accepts the three billion dollars a year in aid from the United States and this money is to purchase weapons from American companies. Relief that comes in the form of weapons, is actually a subsidy to American companies, and the profit left over."*

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AFSC Israel- Palestine Investment Screen and the TIAA-CREF Divestment Campaign

Water Wars

Joyce R. Starr